

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
CU-04 /065 W
-----069248 211154Z /13

R 210910Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6805
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY MANILA
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, TW
SUBJECT: ELECTION OF CHIANG CHING-KUO AS ROC PRESIDENT

1. PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF CHINA MARCH 21, RUNNING UNOPPOSED AND WINNING
1,184 OF THE 1,204 BALLOTS ISSUED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
DELEGATES PRESENT FOR THE DAY'S EVENT. TWENTY BALLOTS
WERE DECLARED INVALID. CHIANG WILL BE INAUGURATED MAY 20
ALONG WITH ALSO UNOPPOSED KMT VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE
HISEH TUNG-MIN WHO IS EXPECTED TO BE ELECTED MARCH 22 BY
A SIMILARLY COMFORTABLE MARGIN, HOWEVER WITH SOMEWHAT
FEWER VOTES THAN RECEIVED BY CCK.

2. AS VICTOR IN THE SIXTH ROC ELECTION, CCK JOINS HIS
FATHER CHIANG KAI-SHEK AS THE ONLY OTHER ELECTED PRESI-
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DENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE ROC UNDER THE PRESENT CON-
SITUITION. INCUMBENT PRESIDENT YEN CHIA-KAN ASSUMED
OFFICE FOLLOWING CHIANG KAI-SHEK'S DEATH DURING HIS
FIFTH CONSECUTIVE TERM IN 1975.

3. ALTHOUGH SUPPORTED BY INDEPENDENTS AND THE TWO OP-
POSITION PARTIES, A VERY LIMITED OPPOSITION TO HIS

PRESIDENCY MAY BE SUGGESTED BY THE 20 INVALID VOTES CAST TODAY, AND PERHAPS BY SOME OF THE 15 ADDITIONAL ELIGIBLE LEGISLATORS WHO DID NOT ATTEND TODAY'S VOTING. BALLOTS WERE PROPERLY MARKED BY STAMPING A CIRCLE ON THE CENTER TOP PART OF THE BALLOT; IF THE CIRCLE WAS PLACED ON THE WRONG PART OF THE BALLOT, OMITTED ENTIRELY, OR REPEATED IN SEVERAL PLACES, THE BALLOT WAS DECLARED INVALID. AS THE ONLY POSSIBLE METHOD OF INDICATING DISSENT APART FROM NOT ATTENDING THE VOTING (WHICH COULD BE CONFUSED WITH LEGITIMATE ILLNESS OR ABSENCE FROM THE COUNTRY OF QUALIFIED LEGISLATORS) SOME, IF NOT ALL, OF THE 20 INVALID VOTES MIGHT BE CONSIDERED AS EXPRESSIONS OF DISSATISFACTION WITH CCK. A SLIGHTLY LARGER NUMBER OF INVALID VOTES IS EXPECTED IN THE VOTING TOMORROW FOR VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE HSIEH TUNG-MIN, AS HIS CANDIDACY HAS BEEN DISCREETLY OPPOSED BOTH BY SOME MAINLANDERS WHO DO NOT WANT TO SEE A TAIWANESE AS VICE PRESIDENT (AMONG OTHER THINGS, FEARING THE ASSUMPTION OF THE PRESIDENCY BY A TAIWANESE IN THE EVENT OF THE DEATH OF CCK), AND OTHERS WHO DID NOT FAVOR HSIEH AMONG OTHER POSSIBLE TAIWANESE FIGURES.

4. IN SPITE OF THIS TOKEN DISSENT, CCK IS CLEARLY REGARDED AS THE MAN FOR THE JOB AT THIS TIME BY THE MAJORITY OF KMT AND NON-MKT POLITICIANS ALIKE.
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ENTHUSIASM FOR HIS PRESIDENCY IS TEMPERED, HOWEVER, BY ONGOING CONCERN OVER THE QUESTION OF HIS SUCCESSOR, A QUESTION WHICH HE HAS NOT ADDRESSED BY HIS CHOICE OF THE 71 YEAR OLD VICE PRESIDENT, AND WHICH HE IS NOT EXPECTED TO INDICATE BY HIS CHOICE OF PREMIER.

5. IN THE PERIOD FOLLOWING CCK'S INAUGURATION ON MAY 20, WE ANTICIPATE SOME SIGNIFICANT CABINET CHANGES, POSSIBLY INCLUDING A NEW FOREIGN MINISTER, AS PRESIDENT CHIANG ATTEMPTS TO BRING HIS MODERATING INFLUENCE TO THE RESOLUTION OF THIS COUNTRY'S ONGOING SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES. HIS NEW STATUS AS CONSTITUTIONALLY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE MAY PERMIT HIM SOMEWHAT GREATER FLEXIBILITY THAN HIS APPOINTED POSITION OF PREMIER IN DEALING WITH THE FURTHER EVOLUTION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN THE ROC.
UNGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TAIPEI01712
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780124-0169
Format: TEL
From: TAIPEI
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780340/aaaabibc.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e31e61c0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3250019
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ELECTION OF CHIANG CHING-KUO AS ROC PRESIDENT
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, TW
To: STATE HONG KONG
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e31e61c0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014